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TO SOCIETAL
BREAKDOWN!
MATURE
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Breakfast of Champions

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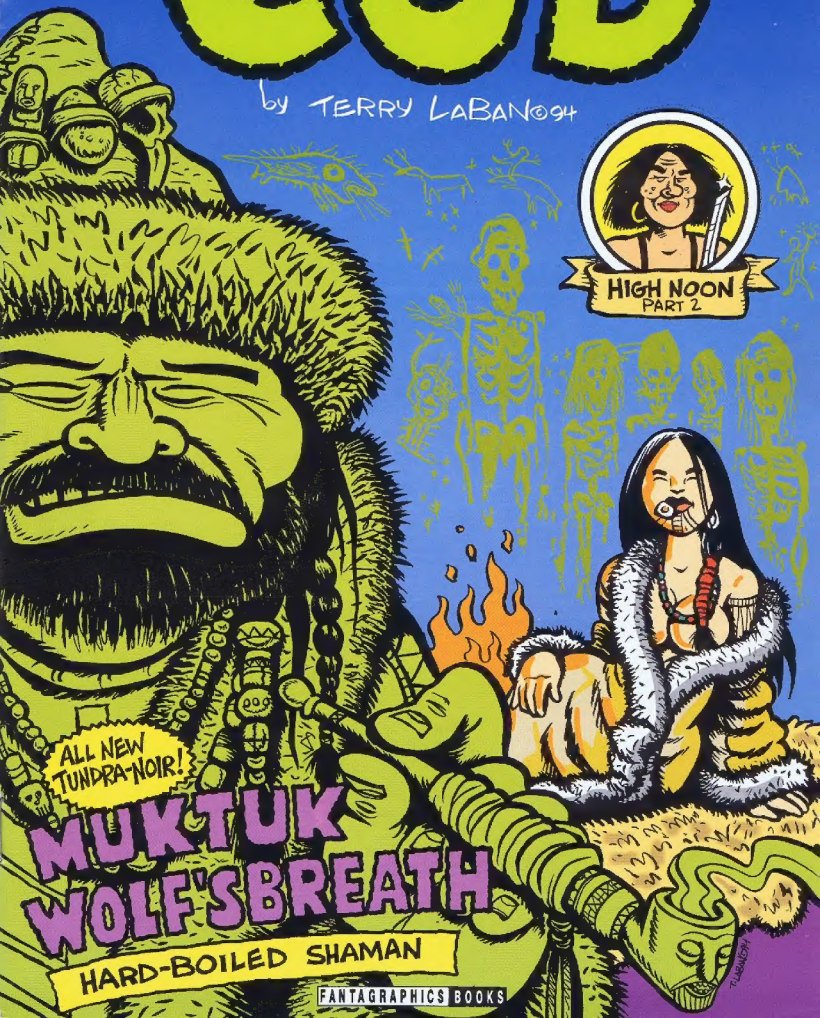
CERTIFIED
OBSCURE
CULTURE
BY THE AMERICAN
OBSCURE CULTURE
COMMITTEE

CUD

by TERRY LABAN ©94



HIGH NOON
PART 2



ALL NEW
TUNDRA-NOIR!

MUKTUK WOLF'S BREATH

HARD-BOILED SHAMAN

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

The Characters



BOB CUDD

AS A RESULT OF A CONTROVERSIAL NEA GRANT, HE BECAME THE MOST FAMOUS PERFORMANCE ARTIST IN AMERICA. WILL HIS CAREER BE DERAILED BY A DISAPPROVING WIFE AND FORMIDABLE COMPETITION?



URSULA CLAMM

SHE CHALLENGED BOB TO A CONTEST FOR THE TITLE OF MOST OUTRAGEOUS PERFORMER. IS SHE THE NEXT CUDD OR JUST ANOTHER WANNABE?



FILA LITTLE

AFTER A HARD LIFE OF ABUSE AND ADDICTION, SHE THOUGHT SHE'D FOUND A SAFE HARBOR IN BOB'S LOVING ARMS. BUT CAN SHE EVER REALLY FIND PEACE OF MIND MARRIED TO THE COUNTRY'S MOST DISGUSTING MAN?



BILLY LITTLE

BOB PAID FOR HIS CANCER CURE AND MOVED HIM WITH HIS MOM, FILA, TO CUDD MANOR. BUT CAN HE LEAVE BEHIND GUNS, DRUGS & RAP?



YONG DONG

AS BOB'S MANAGER, HIS BUSINESS SAVVY LED TO FAME AND FORTUNE. BUT IS IT TIME FOR ANOTHER GOOD THING TO COME TO AN END?

You Can't Spank the Monkey if He's on Your Back, Part 7

GOOD AFTERNOON, EVERYONE, AND WELCOME TO "THE WIDE WORLD OF ART". I'M WARD HOLCROFT, CRITIC-AT-LARGE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. I'LL BE YOUR HOST TODAY, ALONG WITH...

... PANSY DE LAROSA, PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY AT HOTCHKISS STATE, AND AUTHOR OF "THE EFFECTS OF NEO-COLONIALISM ON THE FORMAL ASPECTS OF PRE-POP CONSTRUCTIVISM".

...AND DONNY ETCHING, WINNER OF THE 1988 ARGON GRANT FOR HIS PERFORMANCE PIECE "STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND PAY ATTENTION TO ME".

GREETINGS..

HIYA.

HIGH
NOON

PART II

IT'S STANDING ROOM ONLY HERE AT LINCOLN CENTER FOR WHAT MAY BE THE MOST PUBLICIZED GRUDGE MATCH IN ART HISTORY, AS BOB CUDD AND URSULA CLAMM BATTLE FOR THE TITLE OF "WORLD'S MOST OUTRAGEOUS PERFORMANCE ARTIST". PANSY, DON, HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE ARTISTS HERE TODAY?

WELL, WARD - THOUGH IN THE PAST BOB CUDD HAS PUSHED THE EMOTIONAL AND FORMAL BOUNDARIES OF HIS WORK, LATELY, AS WE ALL KNOW, HE'S MOVED INTO DECIDEDLY LESS CONFRONTATIONAL TERRAIN.

THAT'S RIGHT. URSULA CLAMM IS DERIVATIVE, BUT SHE'S STILL A STRONG CONTENDER. TO WIN TODAY, CUDD'S GOING TO HAVE TO BACK-TRACK THROUGH THE LAST 6 MONTHS OF HIS CAREER. THAT WON'T BE EASY TO DO.

THINK IT'S POSSIBLE?

ABSOLUTELY.

I AGREE. I THINK WE'RE IN FOR A VERY EXCITING CONTEST.

ALL RIGHT- LET'S GO NOW TO ALDA FENUGREEK, IN THE DRESSING ROOM WITH BOB CUDD.

ALDA?



"WE'RE BACK AT LINCOLN CENTER AND BOB CUDD HAS JUST TAKEN THE STAGE FOR HIS FIRST ROUND OF PERFORMANCE."

"IN THIS ROUND, THE ARTISTS WILL ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A GENERAL THEME OR MOOD."

"THAT'S RIGHT, PANSY! IT'S HARD TO DO, AND THE ARTISTS CAN LOSE POINTS FOR INCONSISTENCY LATER ON."



"A NICE OPENING, WARD! CUDD'S COMBINED THE INSTANT SHOCK VALUE AND POPULAR APPEAL OF THE TOILET WITH A DEEPER COMMENTARY ON SEXISM AND GENDER ROLES."

"WELL, DONNY, THE CROWD LIKES IT. BUT I DO THINK CUDD'S GOING TO LOSE POINTS FOR ORIGINALITY. WE'VE SEEN THIS KIND OF THING FROM HIM BEFORE."



"CLAMM'S UP NOW. THIS SHOULDN'T BE A HARD ONE FOR HER TO BEAT."

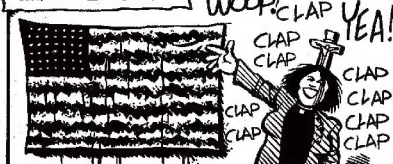


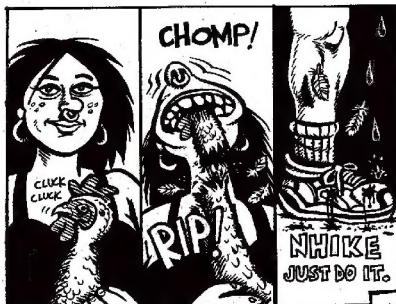
"POWERFUL! DADAIST INFLUENCES EVIDENT HERE AS CLAMM POUNDS A CRUCIFIX INTO HER HEAD AND PAINTS STRIPES ON THE AMERICAN FLAG WITH HER BLOOD!"

"I AGREE, PANSY. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY QUESTION THAT THIS FIRST ROUND GOES TO CLAMM."

"AND HERE'S THE SCORES... CLOSER THAN I THOUGHT IT'D BE! CLAMM SLIGHTLY AHEAD BUT CUDD CAN EASILY TURN IT AROUND."

"IT'S AN IMPRESSIVE START, WARD. WE'LL BE BACK FOR ROUND 2 AFTER THIS!"





"BACK AT LINCOLN CENTER NOW WITH ROUND 2 OF THE CUDD-CLAMM PERFORMANCE ART FACE-OFF. **BOB CUDD'S** ONSTAGE WITH THE SECOND PART OF HIS PERFORMANCE."

"THIS ROUND MAKES OR **BREAKS** CUDD, WARD. HE **KNOWS** HE'S GOTTA **BLOW** THE JUDGES AWAY, OR IT'LL BE **VERY HARD** TO CATCH UP!"



"**AMAZING!** EACH OF THOSE TELEVISION SETS WAS FILLED WITH **RAW SEWAGE!**"



"INCREDIBLE. IF THERE WAS ANY **DOUBT** CUDD COULD STILL DELIVER THE **GOODS**, THEY'VE BEEN LAID TO REST TODAY! LINCOLN CENTER SMELLS **AWFUL!**"

"A **BRUTAL**, YET **ELEGANT** PRESENTATION. **VERY IMPRESSIVE, DON.**"



"ALL RIGHT- HERE'S CLAMM. SHE'LL HAVE TO BE **MIGHTY REMARKABLE** TO BEAT CUDD ON THIS ONE."

"POWERFUL. SHE'S **BELLYDANCING** ON THE PRESERVED BODIES OF **ABORTED FETUSES** AGAINST A **BACKDROP** OF SLIDES OF **MURDERED WOMEN.**"

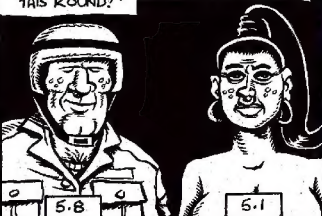
"IT'S AN **IMPACTFUL** STATEMENT, WARD, BUT I THINK IT **LACKS** THE **GUT IMMEDIACY** OF BOB'S PIECE."



"I HAVE TO **AGREE**, PANSY. AT THIS POINT IN A PERFORMANCE, YOU JUST CAN'T AFFORD TO GET TOO **INTELLECTUAL.**"



"HERE ARE THE SCORES. AND IT'S AS WE **PREDICTED**- CUDD'S THE **CLEAR WINNER** THIS ROUND!"



THAT PUTS CUDD ALMOST A FULL POINT AHEAD GOING INTO THE FINAL ROUND. ARE YOU **SURPRISED**, PANSY?

I AM, WARD. CUDD'S LONG-DORMANT CONFRONTATIONISM SEEMS TO HAVE RETURNED WITH A **VENGEANCE.**

HE'S REALLY DONE **SPECTACULAR** WORK TODAY! BUT SO HAS CLAMM, AND THE **WINNER** OF THE NEXT ROUND IS **ANYONE'S GUESS!**

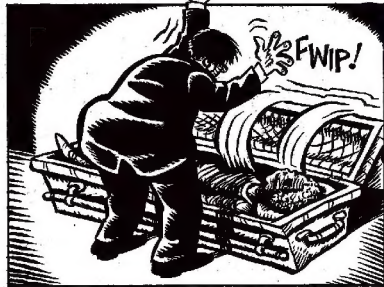




"BACK AGAIN AT LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE THIRD AND FINAL ROUND OF THE CUDD-CLAMM FACE-OFF. CUDD'S ON STAGE NOW."

"A SIMPLE SET HERE, REMINISCENT OF CUDD'S MORE RECENT WORK."

"BUT HE'S GOTTA KNOW, PANSY, THAT IF HE GOES IN THAT DIRECTION NOW, HE'S FINISHED."



"I'M FLOORED! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT IN MY LIFE! BOB CUDD HAS PUBLICALLY SODOMIZED HIS GREAT AUNT'S ROTTING CORPSE!"

"IT'S PANDEMONIUM HERE AT LINCOLN CENTER. I DON'T KNOW HOW URSULA CLAMM CAN TOP THIS ONE!"

"I ALMOST HOPE SHE CAN'T, DONNY. THERE'S GOING TO BE A LOT OF TRAUMATIZED VIEWERS AFTER THE BROADCAST THIS AFTERNOON."



"CLAMM'S ONSTAGE NOW. SHE'S GOTTA BE NERVOUS- YOU CAN HEAR A PIN DROP IN LINCOLN CENTER."

"HERE SHE GOES..."

Hwoo...

HA!

ZUK!



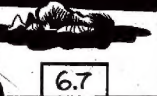
"OMIGOD. I'M IN A STATE OF ABSOLUTE SHOCK. URSULA CLAMM HAS COMMITTED HARKARI, AND, IN THE MOMENTS BEFORE DEATH, CUT HER INTESTINES INTO BITE-SIZED CHUNKS, STIR-FRIED THEM ON A PROPANE STOVE, AND EATEN THEM."

"AND HERE'S THE SCORES... IT'S AS YOU PREDICTED, DONNY- THE JUDGES HAVE AWARDED CLAMM A SCORE SEVEN POINTS OVER PERFECT!"

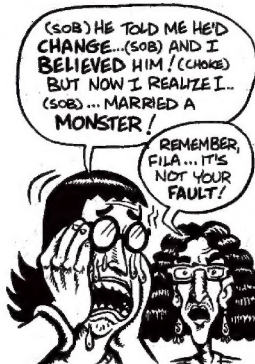
"AN UNBELIEVABLE PERFORMANCE, WARD. I'M QUITE SPEECHLESS MYSELF. THE POWER... THE TRAGEDY..."

"THE CROWD IS REALLY STARTING TO RESPOND NOW. IT'S NEAR RIOT CONDITIONS AT LINCOLN CENTER. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY DOUBT ABOUT WHO WON TODAY."

"AND SHE DESERVES IT, WARD. WE'VE SEEN HISTORY MADE HERE TODAY!"



MEANWHILE, AT CUDD MANOR...





THE WORD GOES OUT, SPREADING
LIKE WILDFIRE ACROSS THE LAND.



AND FROM THE POSH SUITES
OF MIDTOWN MANHATTAN...



...TO THE NICKEL AND DIME BACK-
STREETS OF CRUMBLING DETROIT...



...EVERY LAMMER WHO'S POSSIBLY
ABLE BEGINS TO TRAVEL BY WHATEVER
MEANS NECESSARY...

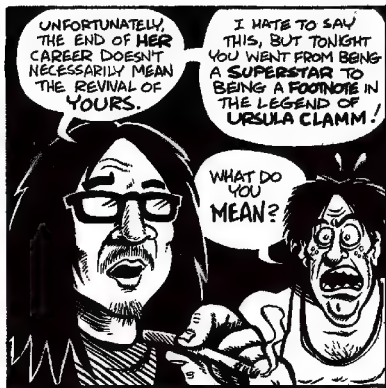


...TO THE VICINITY OF CUDD MANOR.



BUT BACKSTAGE AT LINCOLN CENTER, BOB HAS
YET TO FEEL THE FULL BODY CHECK OF BRUTAL REALITY.





...I HOPE SHE'S NOT
TOO UPSET!



IN THE LAND WHERE THE GROUND WON'T THAW ROOMS

MUKTUK in "THREE KINDS OF FOX"

WOLF'SBREATH

HARD-BOILED SHAMAN

by
TEDDY
LABAN
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"I TRY NOT TO WORK ANY HARDER THAN I HAVE TO. YOU WON'T CATCH ME DOING A THREE-DAY TRANCE WHEN A BIT OF BLOODY FUR PREVIOUSLY STASHED UP MY SLEEVE WILL WORK JUST AS WELL."



"I FIGURED ALL THE HEADMAN'S MOM REALLY NEEDED WAS A LITTLE ATTENTION AND SOME HERBS I'D SLIP HER LATER ON. BUT WHEN PEOPLE PAY WHAT I CHARGE, THEY FEEL CHEATED IF THEY DON'T GET A SHOW."

YOU KNOW, IT'S FASCINATING HOW YOU REACH INSIDE HER BODY, YET LEAVE NO WOUND!

YEAH. IT TAKES YEARS OF TRAINING.

'SCUSE ME A MINUTE, WOULDJA?



"IT LOOKED LIKE ANOTHER WELL-DONE JOB AND ANOTHER WELL-FED SHAMAN. I BARELY NOTICED THE ONLY THING THAT SEEMED ODD THAT NIGHT."

THAT'S WEIRD. THAT FOX IS AWFUL CLOSE TO THE TENT!





"BUT BEFORE I COULD GET TOO SAD ABOUT MY LACK OF SEX APPEAL..."

"...THE OLD LADY I WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE JUST CURED STARTED COUGHING LIKE A WEASEL CHOKING ON A DEER."



"THAT WAS JUST THE BEGINNING. NO SOONER HAD THAT THING HOPPED OUT OF HER GULLET THAN SHE LEVITATED 10 FEET IN THE AIR."



"I WAS FULL OF MEAT AND KUMISS, BUT, NONETHELESS, I MANAGED TO FIND THE ENERGY FOR A COUNTERSPELL."



"NATURALLY, THAT WAS THE END OF THE EVENING'S FESTIVE MOOD."

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, CHIEF, AND I DON'T BLAME YOU. BUT I'M TELLING YOU, THAT WOMAN WAS FINE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FEAST! SOMEONE CAST OR CHANNELLED THOSE SPELLS FROM INSIDE THE TENT!

A RIVAL SHAMAN HERE TONIGHT? **NONSENSE!** FACE IT- YOU DID SOMETHING WRONG!

LISTEN- IF I DON'T FIND THAT SHAMAN AND CURE THE OLD LADY, YOU DON'T PAY!

MESS UP AGAIN, WOLF-SBREATH, AND COLLECTING PAYMENT WILL BE THE LEAST OF YOUR WORRIES.

"I SET UP IN GRANDMA'S TENT INTENDING TO DRAIN EXORCISM. SHE LOOKED LIKE HELL WHEN THEY CARRIED HER IN, BUT BY THE TIME I GOT MY STUFF IN PLACE, SHE WAS SLEEPING LIKE A BABY."

DAMN! THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THIS WOMAN!

ZUP!

"I WALKED OUTSIDE TO HAVE A SMOKE. OVERHEAD, THE NORTHERN LIGHTS SMURD, LIKE THEY TOO THOUGHT I WAS A CHUMP. AGAIN I WENT OVER THE EVENTS OF THE NIGHT. SUDDENLY, I HAD A HUNCH."

IT'S A LONG SHOT, BUT WHAT THE HELL.

"I WALKED TO THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE, WHERE THE BONES FROM THE FEAST HAD JUST BEEN DUMPED. SURE ENOUGH, SOME FOXES WERE WATCHING THE DOGS HAVE A FIELD DAY, WAITING JUST OUT OF REACH TO GET WHAT WAS LEFT. I DIDN'T SEE THE FOX I WAS LOOKING FOR. STILL, IT WAS WORTH ASKING AROUND."

HUNGRY, FELLAS?

EH? WHAT'S IT TO YOU, SHAMAN?

NOT MUCH, FOX, SINCE I'M PRETTY WELL FED. IN FACT, I'M SO FULL, I CAN'T FINISH THIS FAT PIECE OF SEAL MEAT. KNOW ANYONE WHO'D WANT IT?

UUP... WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE?

I'M LOOKING FOR A FOX. BIG, WITH BRIGHT GREEN EYES. HANGS CLOSE TO THE VILLAGE.

SORRY, JACK. ALL THE FOXES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD ARE HERE RIGHT NOW.

WAIT! I'VE SEEN THAT FOX HANGING AROUND THE HEADMAN'S NIECES TENT!

SEE ANYTHING ELSE?

munch munch... YEAH... UUP... I HEARD MOANING... CHANTS...

GOOD. ANYTHING ELSE?

I SAW A DEMON! A BIG, HAIRY ONE!

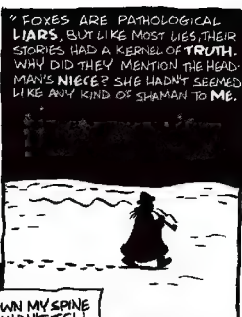
RIGHT! THE WHOLE PLACE GLOWED!



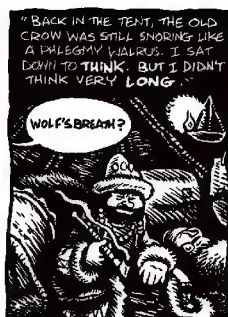
DON'T PUSH IT, ASSHOLES!

HEY! WHAT ABOUT THE REST?

SORRY, JUST REMEMBERED I AM A LITTLE HUNGRY AFTER ALL.



"FOXES ARE PATHOLOGICAL LIARS, BUT LIKE MOST LIES, THEIR STORIES HAD A KERNEL OF TRUTH. WHY DID THEY MENTION THE HEADMAN'S NIECE? SHE HADN'T SEEMED LIKE ANY KIND OF SHAMAN TO ME."



WOLF'S DREAM?

"IT WAS THE GIRL. A CHILL RAN DOWN MY SPINE LIKE A FRIGHTENED VOLE, BUT I COULDN'T TELL IF IT WAS SUSPICION OR ANTICIPATION."



I... JUST WANTED TO SEE HOW SHE'S DOING.



HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I'M SO SORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT. THE ELDERS THINK YOU'RE A FRAUD. BUT I KNOW HOW... POWERFUL YOU ARE.

"SHE MOVED CLOSE TO ME. SHE SMELLED LIKE SUMMER FLOWERS, AND HER BREATH WAS HOT ON MY FACE LIKE THE BLOOD OF A FRESH-KILLED SEAL."

SHE'S DOING FINE.

A GIRL KNOWS. A GIRL LIKE ME, I MEAN.

AND... WHAT KIND OF GIRL IS THAT?



"EVERY OUNCE OF REASON TOLD ME TO PUSH HER AWAY. BUT MY ARMS REACHED FOR HER LIKE THEY'D MADE A PLAN OF THEIR OWN AND HADN'T TOLD ME."

A GIRL WHO KNOWS ABOUT THESE THINGS. WHO MAY HAVE... CERTAIN POWERS HERSELF.

WHAT... POWERS?



"SHE ANSWERED WITH A KISS THAT PIERCED MY HEART LIKE A HARPOON. THE BODY BENEATH HER PARKA WAS ALL GIRL, BUT THE THRILL WAS MATCHED BY AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF DANGER."



"I TRIED TO PULL BACK, BUT SHE HELD ME LIKE A POLAR BEAR DROWNING ITS PREY. I WAS READY TO SAY THE HELL WITH IT AND JUST ENJOY THE RIDE WHEN SUDDENLY..."



"... THERE WAS A BLINDING FLASH."



"I MUST'VE PASSED OUT FOR A MOMENT. I CAME TO ON THE FLOOR, AND WHEN SPOTS CLEARED, I COULD SEE OONA STILL UNCONSCIOUS A FEW FEET AWAY."



"I WENT OVER. NOT A SIGN OF LIFE. HER CHEST WAS SILENT AS AN EMPTY GRAVE. THEN, I NOTICED, COMING FROM HER EAR..."



"IT WAS ONLY THEN THAT I NOTICED THE FIGURE CROUCHED BEHIND SOME FURS..."



"I WAS ON IT IN LESS TIME THAN IT TAKES TO SPIT."



"YOU BETTER TALK, BUDDY, AND FAST!"

"WELL, Y'SEE...I'M NOT REALLY A FOX. I'M OONA'S SPIRIT GUIDE. I THINK SHE'S REALLY A REMARKABLE TALENT!"



"AT LEAST REMARKABLE ENOUGH TO TAKE ME ON, RIGHT?"



SORRY ABOUT THAT. I GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY WHEN I SAW YOU DO THE OLD FUR TRICK. IT'S BEEN DIFFICULT AROUND HERE LATELY. THEY'RE TRYING TO MARRY HER OFF.

...WHAT BLEW UP?

YOU WISELY ENCOURAGED YOUR LITTLE GENIUS TO OVER-EXTEND HER POWER BEFORE SHE WAS READY, MASSIVELY DISLOCATING HER SOUL. IF WE DON'T FIND IT FAST YOU'LL BE A RAVING LUNATIC!

"I DOWNED A COUPLE OF POTENT AGARICS AND SANG A REDUCING SONG. WITHIN MINUTES, WE WERE BOTH HALF THE SIZE OF A FLEA"

"WE WENT TO HER EAR AND LOOKED INSIDE. NOTHING BUT STARS AND ICE."

GOOD JOB.

OH, MAN!

POOR MIXED-UP KID, LOST IN THIS TRACKLESS WASTE. AFTER WHAT JUST HAPPENED, I DON'T EVEN WANNA GUESS HER CONDITION!

HOW WILL WE FIND HER?

YOU'RE A FOX, AREN'T YOU? USE YOUR NOSE!

HEY! GOOD IDEA!

"WE TOOK OFF RUNNING. AFTER WHAT SEEMED LIKE MILLS, WE SPOTTED SOME DARK FORMS AHEAD ON THE GROUND."

THERE!

"IT WAS HER, ALL RIGHT. BUT SHE WAS A MESS, TORN TO PIECES AND SCATTERED ALL OVER THE TUNDRA. WE STARTED TRYING TO ARRANGE HER IN SOME ORDER WHEN SUDDENLY..."

SHIT!

"DEMONS. BIG, UGLY ONES. I COULD HOLD OFF ONE, MAYBE, BUT THERE WERE FOUR IN SIGHT, AND NO DOUBT MORE ON THE WAY. THERE'D BARELY BE TIME TO STUFF HER IN THE BAG BEFORE WE WERE DEVoured."

"I PLUGGED THE BIGGEST ONE WITH A BONE-TIPPED DART, FIGURING WE'D GET AT LEAST A RUNNING START."

Foo!

"IT WORKED. DEVILS AREN'T THAT FAST, AND WE CERTAINLY WEREN'T SLOW. IN NO TIME WE SAW HER EARHOLE IN FRONT OF US AGAIN."

"BACK IN THE TENT, I ASSUMED MY NORMAL SHAPE AND SIZE. LUCKILY, THE NIGHT WAS STILL YOUNG. IT WAS GOING TO BE A CHORE PIECING TOGETHER THIS BROAD."

"IT TOOK AWHILE, BUT I DIDN'T MIND. THE KIDS INSIDE WAS EVERY BIT AS ATTRACTIVE AS HER OUTSIDE."

"AS THE SUN PEEPED OVER THE DISTANT MOUNTAINS, I STUFFED HER SOUL BACK INTO HER BODY. SHE GAVE A COUPLE OF KICKS AND THEN HER PRETTY EYELIDS FLUTTERED."

W...WOLF'S BREATH?

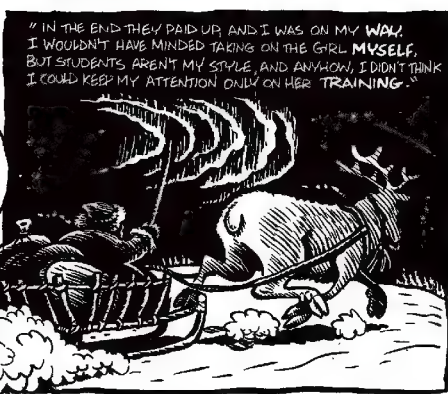
JUST RELAX, BABY. YOU'VE HAD A HARD NIGHT.

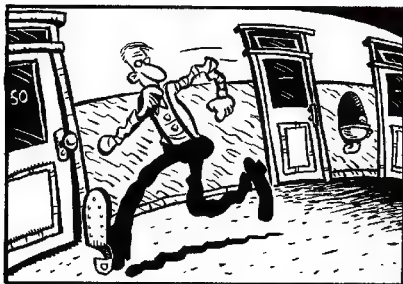
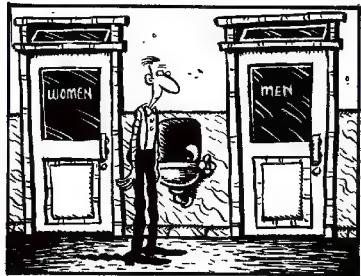
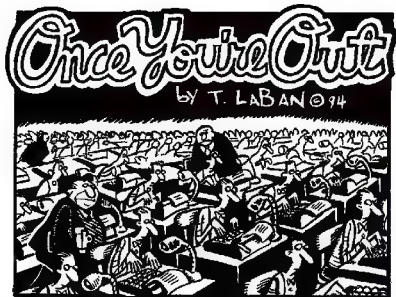
"IT WAS TIME TO TALK TO THE FAMILY."

WELL, CHIEF - IT TOOK MOST OF THE NIGHT, BUT I FOUND THE OTHER SHAMAN.

IMPOSSIBLE! WHO?

YOUR NIECE!









The OPTIPRESS

by TERRY LABAN ©1994

LISTEN, I LIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BIG CITY, AND I READ THE PAPERS EVERY DAY. I KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT THE MODERN WORLD IS A DESOLATE SINKHOLE OF HUMAN MISERY.



AS A HISTORY BUFF, I ALSO KNOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THUS. NEITHER NOSTALGIA NOR URBANISM APPEAL TO ME. FAR AS I CAN SEE, NOTHING'S EVER STOPPED PEOPLE FROM BRUTALIZING EACH OTHER, AND I DOUBT ANYTHING EVER WILL.



IVE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS THAT MOST THINGS HAVE A TENDENCY TO GET WORSE. EACH YEAR IT SEEMS WE WORK HARDER, GET LESS, AND LOSE MORE OF WHAT WE STILL HAVE.



THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO SMILE WHEN I HEAR THE COMPLAINS OF THE SO-CALLED "X-ERS." SURE, WE HAVE IT WORSE THAN OUR PARENTS, BUT TO OUR KIDS, THIS TIME WILL SEEM LIKE PARADISE.



AND YET, IT'S A FUNNY THING—PESSIMISTIC AS I AM, I JUST CAN'T GIVE MYSELF OVER TO Nihilistic DESPAIR.



SOMEHOW, EVEN THOUGH I HAVE VIRTUALLY NO FAITH IN ANYTHING OR ANYBODY, MY OUTLOOK IS BASICALLY POSITIVE. IT'S TRUE I GET DEPRESSED ALL THE TIME BUT IN THE LONG RUN, I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT SOMEHOW, THINGS WILL BE ALL RIGHT.



YUP, THE BIG PICTURE UNDENIABLY SUCKS, BUT WHEN I LOOK AT THE PARTICULARS OF MY OWN LIFE, I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I HAVE IT PRETTY GOOD. IT ALWAYS SURPRISES ME TO REALIZE IT, BUT THERE IT IS.



WHAT CAN I SAY? I'M JUST AN OPTIMISTIC PESSIMIST—AN "OPTIPRESS," IF YOU WILL. TELL ME I'M NANE IF YOU WANT, BUT DON'T TELL ME IT'S THE EVE OF DESTRUCTION ON A SUNNY AFTERNOON.



MAIL *is* GOOD



TERRY - I AM IN HIGH SCHOOL AND AM TAKING ART HISTORY. THIS CLASS I WAS ACTUALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO AT THE END OF LAST SUMMER, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE A CRUEL HOAX. WE HAVE A TERM PAPER FOR THIS SEMESTER ON AN ARTIST FROM THE 17TH CENTURY AND A WORK OF HIS/HERS THAT HAD AN IMPACT. OF COURSE, COMICS WAS WHAT I HAD IN MIND, AND SINCE I HAD SOME RESOURCES AT HOME, ALREADY HAD A HEAD START. BUT, WHEN I ASKED IF I COULD DO A PAPER ON SOMEONE IN COMICS, THE TEACHER REFUSED. I ASKED WHY, AND SHE SAID, AND I QUOTE, "JIMMY, I KNOW YOU LIKE COMICS, BUT I WANT YOU TO DO AN ESTABLISHED ARTIST." ESTABLISHED.?! SO, NOW I'M DOING LICHTENSTEN, WHICH ISN'T BAD, BUT I STILL SEE RED WHEN I THINK OF THAT "ESTABLISHED" BULLSHIT. ~ JIMMY CALLAWAY, ALPINE, GA

TENSTEN SHOULD ANYWHERE BE HELD IN HIGHER ESTEEM THAN THE FOLKS HE EXPLOITED.

TERROR L. - I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHAT VARIOUS CARTOONISTS LISTEN TO WHILE DRAWING. A LOT OF THEM LISTEN TO TALK RADIO OR LEAVE THE TV GOING. I CANNOT EVEN FATHOM IT - IT WOULD BLOW MY CONCENTRATION STRAIGHT TO HELL. ON THE OTHER HAND, I LISTEN TO BLASTING ROCK, BRAIN-WITHERING ANANTE GARDE GOODNESS, FREE JAZZ, ETC. ACTUALLY, I NOTICED THAT I TEND TO LISTEN TO SHORT, ENERGETIC SONGS (60'S GARAGE SHIT, 90'S NOISE SHIT) WHEN DOING STUFF LIKE PLANNING OUT THE PAGE AND PENCILLING. WHEN I'M INKING OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, TEND TO LISTEN TO LONGER PIECES, FREE JAZZ STUFF OR SPACEY, NON-SONG BASED ROCK LIKE CANI, BIOTA OR FAUST. ~ TONY FITZGERALD, BROOKLINE, MD

YOU SHOULD, PNL. NO WONDER EVERY OTHER COUNTRY WITH A GDP LARGER THAN MAINE'S HAS BETTER EDUCATED KIDS THAN WE DO. THAT THE ART FORM IS LEGITIMATE, AS WELL AS UNIQUELY AMERICAN (THEREFORE SUPERIOR, ACCORDING TO THOSE FOLKS IN FLORIDA, TO THE ART FORM OF LESS FREEDOM-LOVING PEOPLES) HARDLY NEEDS RESTATING HERE. BUT IT'S A SAD IRONY THAT A CULTURAL PARASITE LIKE LICHT

I LISTEN TO TALK AND COLLEGE RADIO VIRTUALLY ALL THE TIME. I LISTEN TO THE WERDEST CRAP FOR HOURS BECAUSE I'M TOO LAZY TO GET UP AND TURN IT OFF. ACTUALLY, I'LL LISTEN TO PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING BUT BANDS FRONTED BY GUYS WHO SCREAM AND RADIO WITH COMMERCIALS.

DEAR TERRY - "ENO AND PLUM" WAS GREAT. I'M ONE OF THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF "GENERATION X" AND I CAN'T FUCKIN' STAND IT. AS IF I DIDN'T DETEST THE LABELS PUT ON ME BY MY "PEERS", NOW MTV AND THE AD AGENCIES ARE LABELING ME. I CAN PROUDLY SAY I'VE NEVER WORN A FLANNEL, NEVER REALLY LIKED "PEARL JAM", AND NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED BUYING ANY "NO-FEAR" MERCHANDISE. ~ ED FENDER, SAN MATEO, CA

SUCH FREEDOM OF THOUGHT IN YOUTH IS SURELY COMMENDABLE. TRUST ME, THOUGH, LADDY. SOME DAY YOU'LL REGRET YOUR SLACK JAWED JUNKIES WITH TALES OF THE WILD YEARS YOU SPENT IN GRASS ERA SEATTLE WEARING NOSE RINGS AND SEEING "TAD". I'M SURE YOU'LL TREASURE THOSE MEMORIES AS MUCH AS I DO MINE OF MY PUNK DAYS IN LATE-'70S NEW YORK, WHEN IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR ME TO WAKE UP ON THE FLOOR OF THE MEN'S ROOM AT CBGB'S THE MORNING AFTER A LONG NIGHT DANCING CORE WITH DEE DEE RAMONE. IT ALL SEEMS SO CRAZY NOW, BUT I DON'T REGRET A MINUTE OF IT. AND I PITY THE YOUNGSTERS OUT THERE WHO'LL NEVER EXPERIENCE IT THEMSELVES.

DEAR TERRY - FOR SOME REASON I THOUGHT YOU WERE FROM SEATTLE OR CALIFORNIA OR ONE OF THOSE OTHER OVER-HEATED TRENDY MECCAS OF UNDERGROUND COMICS/MUSIC. BUT NO - YOU'RE A BACKWARDS MID-WESTERNER JUST LIKE ME, AND A FORMER DETROITER, YOU SAY? GOSH! IF YOU MOVE, I'LL HATE YOU. ~ ERIC LACOMBE, KALAMAZOO, MI

IF I EVER DID MOVE, IT SURE WOULDN'T BE TO SEATTLE. THE WHERE PLACE STINKS OF ESPRESSO AND FISH, AND NO ONE EVER WASHES THEIR HAIR.

WRITE: TERRY LABAN
PO BOX 408136
CHICAGO, IL 60640

BOB MOONLIGHTS FOR A DINNER GROCERY STORE CHAIN.



FROM
"SOME READER
IN CLEVELAND"

PUGS

SILVER BALLS #2 - INSTEAD OF THE MUSCULAR YOUNG STUDS IN BULGING CUTOFFS WHO USUALLY PEOPLE THE PAGES OF GAY COMIX, THE CHARACTERS IN THIS LITTLE GEM ARE FAT, BALD, MIDDLE-AGED, SUBURBAN-AND SEXY. AUTHOR QUETZAL REALLY LOVES THESE GUYS, AND YOU CAN SEE IT IN EVERY AFFECTIONATELY RENDERED DOUBLE CHIN, HAIRY BACK AND SAGGING CHEST. THE STORIES AND STRIPS, WHICH FEATURE POOL PARTIES AND FRIENDLY LIVING ROOM HANDJOBS, HAVE A SOPHISTICATED, "NEW YORKERLY" KIND OF FEEL. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING QUITE LIKE IT. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: \$3.50 ppd. FROM HAND JIVE COMIX, PO BOX 46095, LOS ANGELES, CA 90046

PALE, BROKEN, THE BABY BUILT A HOUSE - THESE SMALL UNASSUMING MINIS ARE SURPRISINGLY WELL-DONE. **PALE** & **BROKEN**, BY FRIS DRESEN, DESERVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION. SUPERBLY DRAWN, THEY'RE 8-PAGE POEMS. THIS WOMAN DESERVES A LARGER AUDIENCE. CHECK-EM OUT FOR A QUARTER APEACE FROM VAGABOND PRESS, 2300 N. CUYBURN, PO BOX 2, CHICAGO, IL, 60614. THEY SAY THEY'VE GOT MORE COOL STUFF AND I BELIEVE 'EM.

NAKED EYE #6-7 - S.A. KING'S BEEN GETTING SOME WELL-DESERVED ATTENTION LATELY, AND THE 6TH & 7TH ISSUES OF THESE MINIS ARE PARTICULARLY GOOD. #6 FEATURES ONE OF THE MOST HORRIFYING BUS RIDE STORIES I'VE EVER SEEN, ALL ARE DRAWN IN KING'S SHARP, KINETIC,

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LUCKY 7 - I THINK I'M KIND OF A SUCKER FOR THESE CULTURE-ZINES THAT REVIEW LOTS OF STUFF. THIS ONE, FROM BUFFALO, COVERS BANDS, JAPANIMATION, COMICS, AND MORE, ALL IN A GRITTY, GONZO STYLE. THE INTERVIEW WITH DOTS ALLEN AND THE ARTICLE ON WHM MIDGETS ARE PUNK MAKE IT WORTH THE \$1.50 FROM AVENUE PLAYER, 581 POTOMAC, BUFFALO, NY 14222

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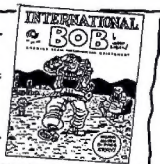
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